

**Meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Forum**  
**22 December 2025 at 3:00 p.m.**  
**at Conference Room, 30/F, Southorn Centre**

**Present**

**Government representatives**

Assistant Director of Home Affairs (3)	Mr Wilson KWONG (Chairperson)
Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (5)	Ms Daisy LO
Chief Executive Officer (3), Home Affairs Department	Ms Rebecca CHAN

**Representatives of public bodies**

Training Officer (Ethnic Minorities Unit), Equal Opportunities Commission	Mr LAI Wing-yiu
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**Representatives of non-government organisations**

Caritas Hong Kong	Ms Celine CHAN
Hong Kong Christian Service	Mr Mike CHEUNG
Hong Kong Community Network Limited	Mr Dennis TSANG
Hong Kong Integrated Nepalese Society Limited	Mr Binay SHAH
International Social Service Hong Kong Branch	Mr James SUEN
Jammu Kashmir Association (HKSAR)	Mr Rehan GULFAREED
Nepali Social Service Hong Kong	Mr M B THAPA
The Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong	Mr Zaman Minhas QAMAR
The Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society, Kowloon	Mr WONG Chun-kit
The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council	Ms Connie WONG
Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service	Ms Margo MOK

## **Other attendees**

### *For Agenda Item 1*

Principal Executive Manager (Heath)3A,  
Health Bureau  
Senior Manager, St. James' Settlement  
Service Coordinator, St. James' Settlement  
Chief Supervisor, St. James' Settlement  
Call Handler, St. James' Settlement  
  
Call Handler, St. James' Settlement

Mrs Susanne IP  
  
Ms Mandy AU YEUNG  
Mr Johnson LEUNG  
Mr Alvin SO  
Ms Anghela Bitancor  
MELENEZ  
Mr Dilpreet Singh  
SANDHU

### *For Agenda Item 2*

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and  
Welfare (Children)

Mr Kevin LI

## **Secretary**

Acting Senior Executive Officer (Race Relations  
Unit), Home Affairs Department

Mr Nichole CHENG

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Chairperson welcomed attendees to the meeting.

## **2 New Policy Address Initiatives for Ethnic Minorities**

2.1 The Chairperson said that Home Affairs Department (HAD) had implemented the new initiative for supporting ethnic minorities announced in the 2024 Policy Address. The new HOPE Interpretation and Translation Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities commenced services on 10 December 2025. Including CHEER Centre, there were currently two centres providing interpretation and translation services for ethnic minorities.

2.2 The Chairperson also updated that the Chief Executive had announced in the 2025 Policy Address that, one additional Ethnic Minority Care Team would be established under the support service centres serving the North and Islands Districts respectively to cope with the anticipated population growth and the demand of ethnic minorities in the two districts. The 10 support service centres would also establish a Youth Network and a Women's Network to organise activities specifically for ethnic minority youths and women, thereby helping them to unleash their potential and promoting their physical and mental well-being. The services were expected to commence in April 2026.

## **3 18111 Mental Health Support Hotline**

3.1 The Chairperson invited Mrs Susanne IP and representatives of the St. James' Settlement to introduce the "18111 Metal Health Support Hotline" (the Hotline). Mrs IP advised that the Health Bureau had engaged the St. James' Settlement to operate the Hotline. One of the new features is to provide multi-language support for ethnic minorities. Mr Alvin SO explained that the Hotline, which was an initiative in the 2022 Policy Address, aimed at promoting mental health. It provided 24/7 service via phone and WhatsApp with dedicated staff providing one-stop support. New features launched on 4 November 2025 include WhatsApp support, multi-language support in 9 ethnic minority languages (Hindi, Nepali, Urdu, Punjabi, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Bengali and Thai), scheduled callbacks, and additional optional resources such as

human library, relaxation and self-help skills and support service information.

3.2 Mr Johnson LEUNG presented the statistics on the Hotline's utilisation by ethnic minorities or non-Chinese speakers since June 2025, noting that these callers were younger on average and exhibited more severe psychological distress than other callers. Major mental health issues included loneliness/social isolation and anxiety disorders, while key relationship problems involved romantic partners, spouses, or courtships. Ms Anghela Bitancor MELENEZ shared her experience in helping an ethnic minority domestic worker, stressing the need for language and cultural sensitivity. Mr Dilpreet Singh SANDHU recounted a case with an Indian caller, underscoring the Hotline's value in crisis intervention and offering hope.

3.3 Issues raised by attendees and the discussions were summarised below:

3.3.1 One attendee noted that most members of ethnic minority communities were unaware of the Hotline service and called for stronger outreach and education efforts to promote the service. Mr LEUNG replied that they planned to launch different online campaigns and leverage the government platform "Shall We Talk". Mrs IP added that the Health Bureau had invited well known artists such as Mr Eason CHAN to film promotional videos. A publicity event was held in early November 2025 to launch the new features of the hotline, including the multi-language support for ethnic minorities. Two of the ethnic minority call handlers shared their experiences and stories at the event. The attendee suggested conducting promotions at the Kowloon Masjid. Mrs IP noted this suggestion and said they would coordinate with St. James' Settlement.

3.3.2 One attendee inquired whether the Hotline provided legal advice, noting that a call handler had mentioned offering advice on a case involving a foreign domestic helper. Mr LEUNG replied that the Hotline's role was to provide mental health support to callers. However, the Hotline provided call handlers with resource kits on some general information and they could also use A.I. to search for relevant information. For legal advice, call handlers could refer to the Hotline's referral resources database and provide relevant information to callers.

- 3.3.3 One attendee asked about post-referral follow up, including the number of cases requiring further support and referral to specific service provider. She also noted that statistics show that males had more difficulty accessing help and asked if the Hotline formulated strategies to target the male community. Mr SO replied that, since June 2025, they made over 100 referrals involving more than 40 organisations and units, including Crisis Intervention Centres, Integrated Family Service Centres and Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness, and others. Mr LEUNG added that the Hotline offered a self-directed social service information system where callers selected their problem type and living district, and the system would generate tailored service recommendations to assist those who was reluctant to speak with handlers. Mr LEUNG stated that the anonymous nature of the Hotline, avoiding requests for names, backgrounds, or real identities, especially via WhatsApp without callbacks, was key to attracting male users despite some typical barriers to social services. Mr SO further supplemented that, for referred cases, follow-up calls would be made about one month after the referral to check whether the organisation handling the case had met the client's expectations. The Hotline could act as a communication bridge to enhance collaboration, with up to two follow-up calls per case.
- 3.3.4 One attendee inquired about the ethnic distribution of callers, the proportion who were domestic helpers, the number of social worker call handlers, and the training provided to them. Mr LEUNG replied that they were currently building a database because ethnic minority language support only started in November 2025, so detailed breakdowns by ethnicity and occupation were unavailable. However, Urdu and Nepali were the two main languages spoken by these callers. Mr SO added that the call handlers came from diverse backgrounds, including graduates from social work, nursing, and counselling, with most having experience in mental health service. Before performing duties, they underwent 30 hours of pre-job training covering mental health knowledge, crisis intervention, counselling skills, and related topics. Mr LEUNG supplemented that call handlers were supported by two experienced on-site supervisors for immediate assistance. Although not all call handlers were social workers or counsellors, over 50% hold counselling, psychological, or social work-related qualifications, and they received ongoing supervision via demonstrations, role plays and voice recording

reviews to monitor service quality. There were currently 14 ethnic minority call handlers covering the nine ethnic minority languages.

- 3.3.5 One attendee noted that many people might prefer face-to-face communication over phone calls, as mental stress could affect clear expression. He suggested establishing a physical centre to improve the service. Mr SO replied that they valued every opportunity to develop the service. In the meantime, they would focus on providing high-quality hotline services while keeping an eye on future developments.
- 3.3.6 One attendee enquired whether there was any online platform available for people to access relevant information. Mr LEUNG replied that the Hotline mainly used WhatsApp, allowing users not only chat directly but also browse mental health tips or pre-recorded life stories on how to seek help and cope with mental problems. The Hotline also closely collaborated with the “Shall We Talk” platform to provide online resources to the public. The attendee further enquired if any of the 14 ethnic minority call handlers were Nepalese. Mr LEUNG replied that there were Nepalese call handlers and they wished to recruit more ethnic minority call handlers, hoping to promote mental health knowledge to the community through staff trainings.
- 3.3.7 The Chairperson asked about the caseload from ethnic minority callers and general callers between June and November 2025, and whether St. James’ Settlement was also responsible for publicity and public education in addition to operating the Hotline. He suggested leveraging the networks of the Ethnic Minorities Forum as well as the 10 Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities funded by the Home Affairs Department to distribute promotional materials. Mr LEUNG replied that ethnic minority callers account for about 3% of the total number of calls, and St. James’ Settlement would collaborate with the “Shall We Talk” platform on additional educational efforts. Mrs IP added that today’s presentation at the Ethnic Minorities Forum served as a form of publicity, noting that St. James’ Settlement was one of the Health Bureau’s synergy agencies, and that the Bureau was working with all engaged NGOs.

## **4 Implementation of the Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance**

4.1 Upon the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr Kevin LI briefed the attendees on the Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance (the Ordinance), effective from 20 January 2026, aiming to ensure early identification and effective intervention of suspected serious child abuse cases to attain the policy objective of child protection. The mandatory reporting regime (MRR) of child abuse mandates 25 categories of specified professionals in the social welfare, education and healthcare sectors to report suspected serious child abuse cases. Those who contravene the legal obligations under the Ordinance commits an offence and is liable to fines and/or imprisonment. To support the implementation, two residential child care centres would commence operation in 2025 and six service teams under the Child Protection Support Service (ChildPRO) have been set up to provide focused intervention and professional support to children who had been abused or were at risk of abuse and their families. The Government also launched the Child Protection Campaign in January 2025 to enhance the mandated reporters and the public's understanding of the Ordinance and raise their awareness of child protection.

4.2 Issues raised by attendees and the discussions were summarised below:

4.2.1 One attendee welcomed this new ordinance, which would provide further protection to children, especially those with special educational needs. He inquired how non-governmental organisations could help support the ordinance and whether relevant leaflets in ethnic minority languages would be available for future distribution. Mr LI said the Government appreciated representatives from ethnic minority communities to assist in promoting positive message about child protection. Mr LI supplemented that the Commission on Children had commissioned several non-governmental organisations to conduct projects aiming at raising awareness among ethnic minority communities, with leaflets and promotional materials in various ethnic minority languages which could be distributed to attendees through the Secretariat. Mr LI also welcomed collaboration with attendees such as setting up booths or conducting workshops for different communities.

**5 Any Other Business**

5.1 There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

5.2 For the date of next meeting, attendees would be duly informed nearer the time.

**Home Affairs Department  
January 2026**